



Judicial Conduct Commission Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2014-2015

Judicial Conduct Complaints:

In the 2014-2015 fiscal year, the Commission considered 284 complaints. The Commission concluded 266 complaints, fourteen of which resulted in imposed sanctions:

Commission Members

Stephen D. Wolnitzek, Chair
Covington

Judge Janet L. Stumbo
Prestonsburg

Judge Eddy Coleman
Pikeville

Judge David P. Bowles
Louisville

Diane E. Logsdon
Elizabethtown

Joyce King Jennings
Louisville

Alternate Members

J. David Boswell
Paducah

Judge Laurance B. VanMeter
Lexington

Judge Jeffrey M. Walson
Winchester

Judge Karen A. Thomas
Newport

Commission Staff

Ms. Jimmy Shaffer
Executive Secretary

J. Rachel Noyes
Executive Assistant

Judicial Conduct Commission
P.O. Box 4266
Frankfort, KY 40604-4266
Phone: 502-564-1231
Fax: 502-564-1233

- **Seven Private Admonitions**

- **Four Private Reprimands**

1. [July 23, 2014](#) - Violation of Canon 5A(1)(d), which prohibits a candidate for judicial office from making a contribution to a political candidate.
2. [August 15, 2014](#) - Violation of Canon 5A(1)(b), which prohibits a candidate for judicial office from acting as a leader in a political organization.
3. [December 5, 2014](#) - Violation of Canon 2D, which prohibits a judge from conveying the impression that others are in a special position to influence the judge; violations of Canon 4A(1), which prohibits a judge from participating in activities which cast reasonable doubt on the judge's ability to act impartially; and violation of 5A(1)(c), which prohibits a judge from publicly endorsing a candidate for public office.
4. [April 2, 2015](#) - Violation of Canon 2D, which prohibits a judge from conveying the impression that others are in a special position to influence the judge and Canon 5A(1)(c), which prohibits a judge from publicly endorsing a candidate for public office.

- **Two Public Reprimands**

1. [Judicial Candidate Dana M. Cohen](#) - Violations of Canon 5A(1)(c), which prohibits a candidate for judicial office from publicly endorsing a candidate for public office and Canon 5A(1)(d), which prohibits a candidate for judicial office from making a contribution to a political candidate.
2. [Judge Sandra L. McLaughlin](#) - Violation of Canon 3B(4), which requires a judge to be dignified and courteous to litigants and Canon 3B(5), which prohibits words or conduct manifesting bias or prejudice.

- **One 15-day Suspension**

1. The Commission initiated formal proceedings against [Judge Gregory T. Popovich](#) on February 19, 2015. Following a hearing, held on May 28, 2015, Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Final Order were entered on June 18, 2015, which ordered a 15-day suspension for violations of Canons 1, 2A, 2D, 3A, 3B(2),(4) and SCR 4.020(1)(b)(i).

The Commission initiated formal proceedings against [Judge Steven D. Combs](#) on April 27, 2015. An Order of Temporary Suspension from Duties Pending Final Adjudication was entered following a temporary suspension hearing held on June 16, 2015. The temporary suspension remained in effect at the end of the fiscal year.

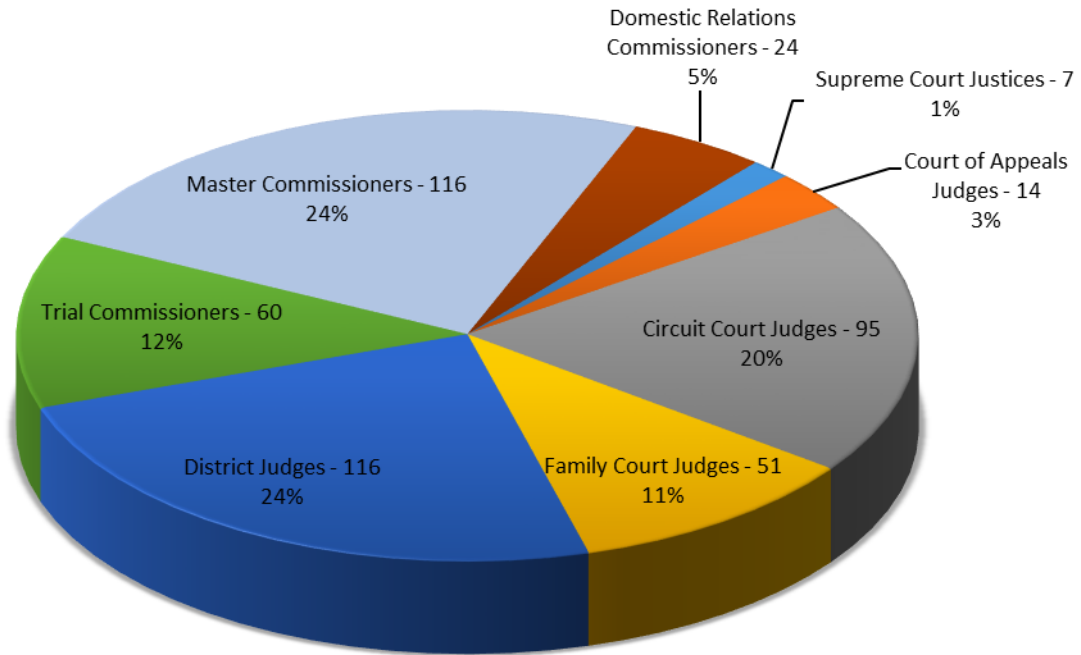
Forty-four complaints were pending at the end of the fiscal year, twenty-six of which were received prior to the end of the fiscal year but too late to be considered in the 2014-2015 fiscal year, and eighteen of which were carried over after initial consideration.

Complaints:

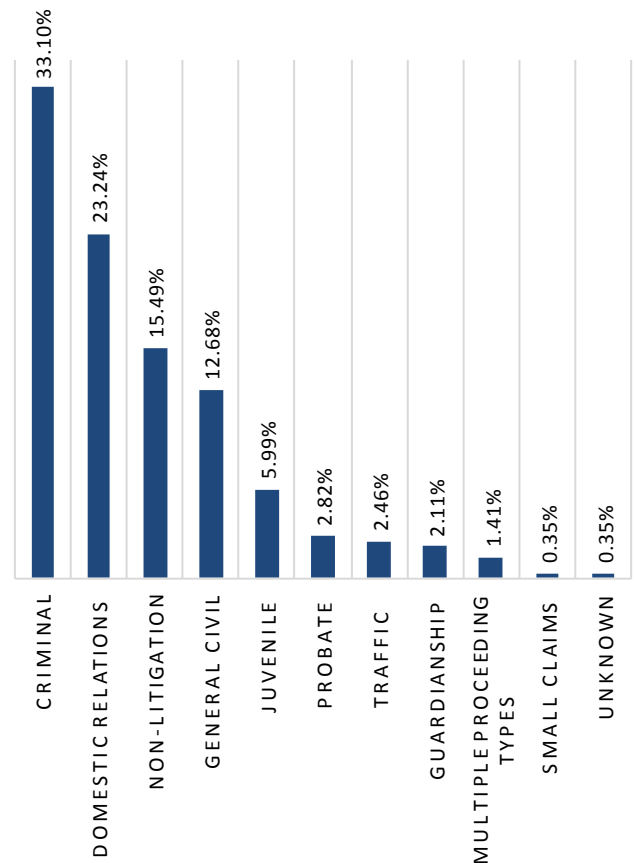
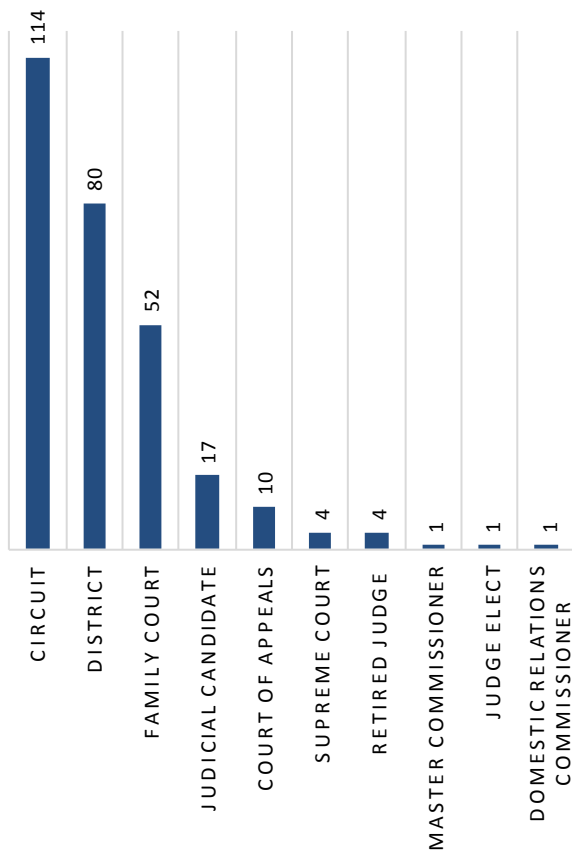
- **29** - Number of complaints pending at the beginning of the fiscal year
- **281** - Number of complaints received during the fiscal year
- **266** - Number of complaints disposed of during the fiscal year
- **18** - Number of complaints pending final consideration at the end of the fiscal year
- **26** - Number of complaints pending initial consideration at the end of the fiscal year

Jurisdiction:

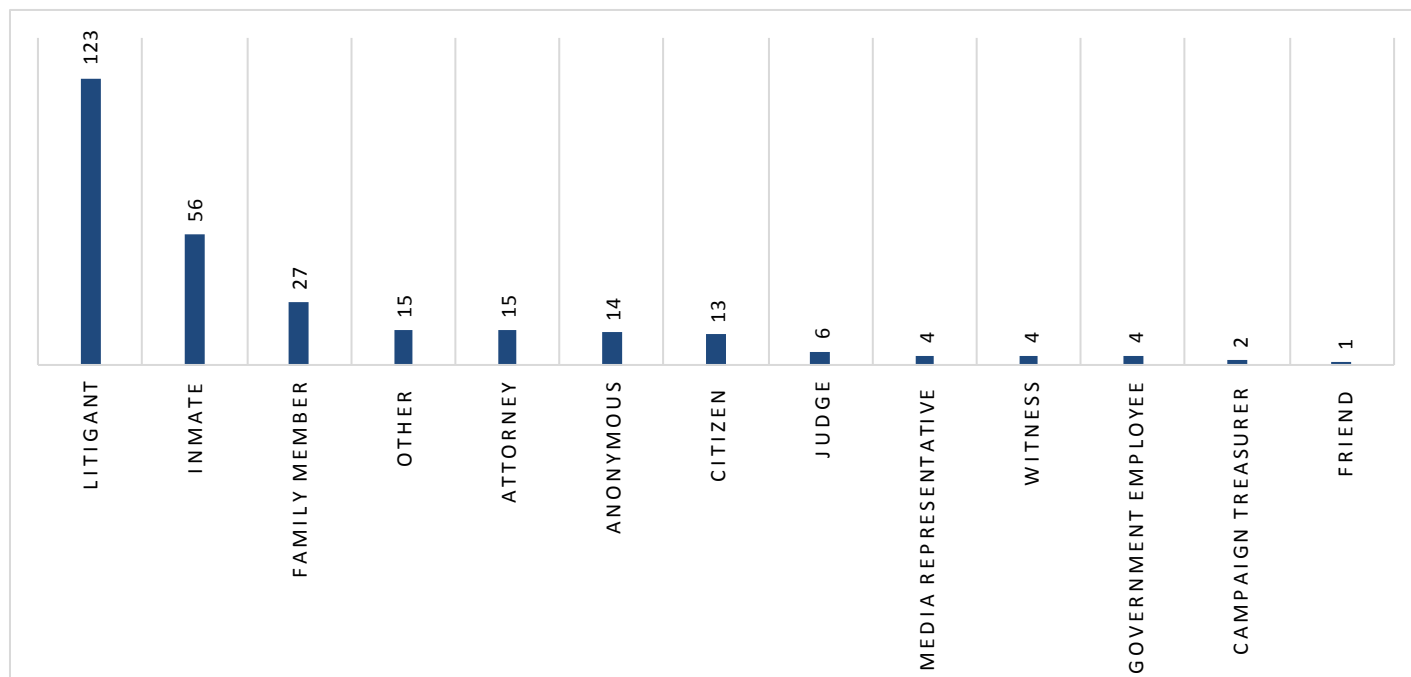
There are 367 judicial positions in the Commonwealth of Kentucky within the jurisdiction of the Commission. Additionally, the Commission has jurisdiction over attorneys who have filed as candidates for judicial office.



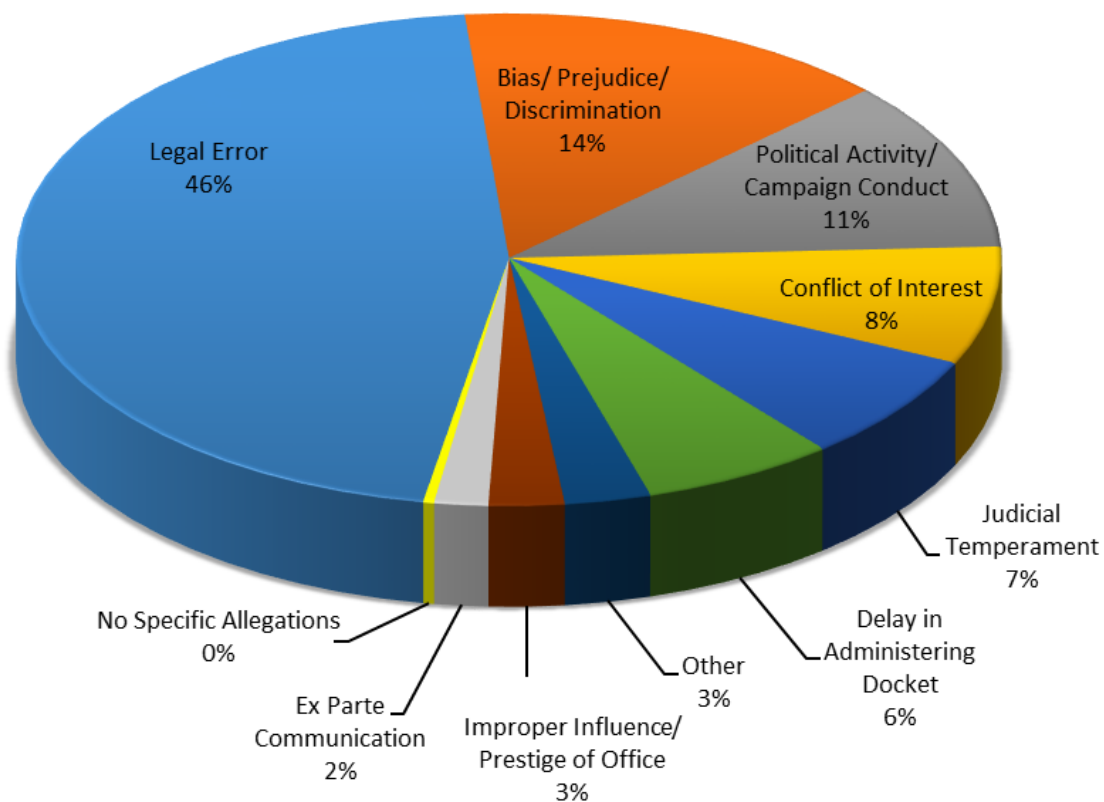
Number of Complaints by Judicial Position: What Types of Proceedings Resulted in Complaints?



Who Filed Complaints?



What were the Allegations?



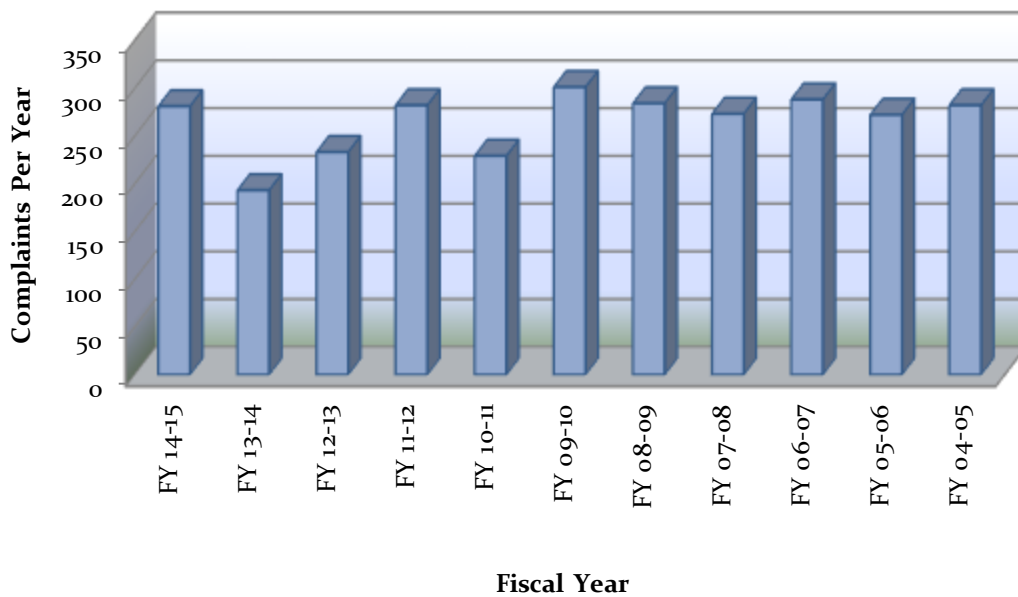
Complainant Representation in Court:

- 43.31% were represented by counsel
- 22.54% appeared *pro se*
- 19.37% not applicable (non-litigation)
- 13.38% unknown
- 1.41% were represented by counsel, then appeared *pro se*

2014-2015 Presentations:

- **District Judges College** - “When Trouble Comes: How to Avoid It and How to Respond to It” presented by Judge David Bowles and Ms. Jimmy Shaffer, on September 15, 2014.
- Presentation of the Kentucky Pretrial System to the Cook County, IL trial judges in Chicago by Judge David Bowles on June 10-11, 2015.

10-Year Complaint History



About the Judicial Conduct Commission

The mission of the Kentucky Judicial Conduct Commission is to protect the public, to encourage judges, commissioners and candidates for judicial office to maintain high standards of conduct, and to promote public confidence in the integrity, independence, competence, and impartiality of the judiciary.

The Commission accomplishes this mission through its investigation of complaints of judicial misconduct, wrongdoing or disability. In cases where judges, commissioners and candidates for judicial office are found to have engaged in misconduct or to be incapacitated, the Kentucky Constitution authorizes the Commission to take appropriate disciplinary action, including issuing admonitions, reprimands, censures, suspensions, or removal from office.

<http://courts.ky.gov/commissionscommittees/JCC>